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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 001780

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SUBJECT: UNAMI SRSG QAZI'S MAY 25 MEETING WITH THE
AMBASSADOR

Classified By: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶11. (C) Summary: On May 25, Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ashraf Qazi told the Ambassador that

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Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) President Massoud Barzani would be publicly adamant about holding the Article 140 referendum this year; privately, he may be amenable to a delay if a scapegoat is found. Qazi briefed the Ambassador on the progress of the provincial elections and noted the response of the GoI to the UN Human Rights Report. Finally, he informed the Ambassador that by mid-June the UNAMI would increase its staff in Baghdad to 65. End Summary.

UNAMI assistance on Article 140

¶12. (C) Recently returned from a trip to the KRG, the Special Representative of the Secretary General, Ashraf Qazi said that Massoud Barzani would be publicly adamant about holding the Article 140 referendum this year. If the referendum must be delayed for some technical reason, then Barzani may be amenable to postponing it. According to Qazi, Barzani was explicit that if the date passes without a referendum, the KRG could take the area by force; therefore, a new solution must be found.

¶13. (C) The Ambassador encouraged UNAMI to take a larger role in the negotiations of Article 140 and Kirkuk. Qazi indicated that to do so, UNAMI would need both USG support and a new UN resolution. The new UN resolution would provide a scapegoat allowing Barzani to save face when acquiescing with the delay of the referendum. The Ambassador said that the USG would support UNAMI in this role, but that the priority of the USG was the hydrocarbon law. Qazi indicated that they would begin consulting with President Talabani's chief of staff on the issue immediately.

Provincial Elections

¶14. (C) Qazi also noted the progress of the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC), saying his first impressions of the new commissioners was a good one. According to Qazi, the Commissioners wanted the UN to establish and monitor election criteria. He also requested Post's administrative assistance on a number of issues, on behalf of IHEC.

¶15. (C) Qazi said that while the desire to have provincial elections before the end of the year was high, it would not be a feasible plan if only one in Anbar occurred. The Ambassador agreed that a single provincial election would be

unusual, but that a public plan of staggered elections that began in Anbar would merit serious consideration.

¶16. (C) Qazi agreed with the Ambassador that the GOI needed to pass a new election law soon and indicated that UNAMI remained engaged in helping the new IHEC on this and other issues. Qazi also noted the lack of movement thus far from any party on a draft form this law, and suggested a coordinated approach for the USG and the UNAMI.

Human Rights Report

¶15. (C) The UNAMI Human Rights Officer, Hania Mufti offered to work with the USG and analyze UNAMI's recent Human Rights Report to identify outstanding concerns. She further noted that since releasing the report, UNAMI was seeing progress on the issues raised in it. For instance, the Ministry of the Interior offered access to detention facilities to UNAMI, though a visit has not yet occurred. The CoR Human Rights committee has expressed interest in working with UNAMI to address the issues in the report, and the KRG has created a high level ministerial to provide human rights information to UNAMI.

UNAMI Staffing

¶16. (C) Only about 40 UNAMI staff are on the compound since a recent IDF attack hit a residential structure on the UNAMI compound; Qazi said that additional measures were being taken and that by mid-June the entire complex would be hardened. At that point, about 65 staff would be housed on the compound. The Ambassador expressed strong concern about the reduced staffing in Baghdad-- down from over 100 in November

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2006 -- and emphasized the importance of a robust UNAMI presence on the ground in Iraq.

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